

Patrick Barry House
692 Mt. Hope Avenue
Rochester
Monroe County
New York

HABS No. NY-5651

HABS
NY,
28-ROCH,
25-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. NY-5651

PATRICK BARRY HOUSE

NY,
28-ROCH, 25-

Location: 692 Mt. Hope Avenue, Rochester, Monroe County,
New York

Present Owner: University of Rochester, River Campus Station,
Rochester, New York

Present Occupant: Mr. and Mrs. Robert Sproull

Present Use: Residence of the Provost of the University of
Rochester

Statement of
Significance: This fine example of a simplified Italianate
structure built from designs of Gervase Wheeler
illustrates the prevalent mid-century theory of
the suitability and desirability of a villa or
mansion adapted to the suburban or rural land-
scape. The Patrick Barry House, the home of one
of Western New York's prominent nurserymen, is lo-
cated in the Mt. Hope-Highland Historic District.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1855-7.
2. Architect: Built from plans of Gervase Wheeler.
3. Original and subsequent owners: "Beginning at a point
2 and 15/100 chains south along Mt. Hope Avenue (formerly
Henrietta Road) from the intersection of the north line
of lot 18 and said road, thence east at right angles to
the road 14 and 54/100 chains, thence south at right
angles 3 and 04/100 chains, thence west at right angles
13 and 95/100 chains to a point lying alongside the
avenue, thence north to the place of beginning a distance
3 and 09/100 chains..."

1839 Deed, March 20, 1839, Book 46, p. 474.
From: Harvey Gilman and Nancy, his wife,
To: George Ellwanger and Thomas Rogers.
For: \$1,900.00.
The northern part of town lot 18 in the town of
Brighton.

- 1840 Deed, May 5, 1840, Book 50, p. 391.
From: Thomas Rogers.
To: George Ellwanger.
For: \$6,000.00.
His half share in the above described property.
- 1862 Deed, December 29, 1862, Book 174, p. 26.
From: George Ellwanger and Cornelia B., his wife.
To: Patrick Barry.
For: \$1.00.
Quitclaim deed of the premises already being occupied by Patrick Barry.
- 1890 Deed, July 24, 1890, Book 477, p. 24.
By will the house and the land on which it sat were left to his wife, Harriet E. Barry, who subsequently married Bernard Liesching.
- 1952 Deed, December 4, 1952, Book 2794, p. 289.
From: Lincoln Rochester Trust Company, as executor of the will of Harriet E. Barry Liesching.
To: Frederic G. Barry.
For: \$20,800.00.
The Patrick Barry homestead and lot.
- 1962 Deed, December 21, 1962, Book 3482, p. 54.
From: Clay Goodloe Barry, William Crawford Barry, Jr., Charles H. Stearns, H. Brewster Barry, Peter Barry, as heir and executor of the estate of Frederick G. Barry.
To: The University of Rochester.
For: \$1.00.
Consideration not to exceed \$100.00. For, among other things, the Patrick Barry homestead and lot.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Unknown.
5. Original plan and construction: Original plans were in the house in 1962, but have since disappeared.
6. Alterations and additions: The servants' quarters were extended after 1870. Complete interior and exterior restoration of the house was done by Elizabeth Holahan, 1963-65. A powder room was inserted under the rear stairway, replacing the flight of stairs to the basement.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Patrick Barry, original owner and builder of the house, came

to Rochester from Long Island in 1840. He and his partner, George Ellwanger, established the Mt. Hope Botanical and Pomological Garden, popularly known as the Ellwanger and Barry Nursery. The nursery imported plant material from Europe, developed new strains, and shipped fruit trees and other products to the newly developing markets in the western United States and abroad. Barry, as head of the horticulture department of the New Genesee Farmer under Daniel D. T. Moore after 1845, and as the author of articles in the Horticulturist, helped inform and educate a generation of nurserymen. Barry was also prominent in the community. He was a member of the Board of Directors of the Rochester Gas Light Company and the Flour City National Bank. He was elected alderman for the 12th Ward in 1860. In 1875, he was on the Board of Inspectors of the Monroe County Penitentiary. He also served as president of the Mechanics Savings Bank, Exchange Street, in 1876.

It is interesting to note that Wheeler's two publications, Rural Homes: Or, Sketches of Houses Suited to American Country Life (1851) and Homes For the People in Suburb and Country; The Villa, the Mansion and the Cottage, Adapted to the American Climate and Wants (1855) appeared just prior to the construction of the Barry House.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: "Bird's Eye View of Mt. Hope Nurseries," from Moore's Rural New Yorker, vol. XXII, No. 17, Oct. 22, 1870. The house is shown without the rear, single story addition. The carriage house is shown with a two story wing to the east.

2. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources: Deeds and Incorporation dockets from the Office of the Monroe County Clerk and contemporary letters by Elizabeth Holahan and press releases from the University of Rochester now in the files of the Landmark Society of Western New York describe some of the history of the house.

b. Secondary and published sources:

Country Homes Magazine, V (January-February, 1925), 25-27.

McIntosh, W. H. History of Monroe County, New York. Philadelphia: Everts, Ensign and Everts, 1877.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The variety and consistency of interior and exterior forms and details in the Italianate mode present a complete record of the use of this style in mid-century residential architecture.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: 87 feet 11 inches by 52 feet; 3 bay projecting entrance facade; two stories; irregular layout in a rectangular plan; square wing to the south.
2. Foundations: The slightly elevated dressed limestone foundation has regularly placed screened and barred windows. Open north and east porches are set on brick foundations pierced by iron grillwork in a quatrefoil diaper pattern. A limestone drip course is set upon the foundation.
3. Wall construction: The rose brick is set with a beaded mortar. All woodwork is painted a grey-buff to match the carved limestone segmentally arched window moldings and other decorative stone elements.
4. Structural system, framing: Masonry walls; wood framed roof system.
5. Chimneys: Five low red brick chimneys have corbled caps.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The main or west entrance doorway is recessed in a slightly projecting, hipped roof porch which has an imposing molded limestone arch centered with a flat banded keystone. The arched, double glass doors are framed by two long, narrow arched sidelights. On the east, the rear door is also recessed. A separate closed entrance leads to the basement.
 - b. Windows: The window compositions on the main facade are elaborate and varied. The heavily

bracketed arched window frame on the first floor, to the left of the entrance, has a scroll keystone. The large center arched window with double hung sashes of four over four lights is flanked by narrow arched windows with two over two light sashes. The second floor windows above this composition is similarly framed. It is composed of two segmentally arched windows with double hung, four over four light sashes. Similar compositions are present on the north facade. The projecting bay to the right of the entrance is elaborately framed with limestone quoins. The large segmentally arched window with four over four light sashes contains an applied arched stone window frame. The whole composition is topped by a low ornamental stone balustrade which provides protection for the rather simple segmentally arched French windows with two over four light sashes. All other windows are segmentally arched with double hung four over four light sashes. All windows have pronounced stone sills.

7. Roof: The complex gable roof is covered with seamed tin. The deeply molded eaves are bracketed with a variety of ornamental wood details which finish the open gables as pediments. An octagonal tower, located at the southwest corner, tops a square base. The seamed tin roof is topped by a finial. The deeply molded eaves are elaborately bracketed. There are four arched windows with double hung four over four light sashes in the tower.
8. Porches, stoops: The semi-enclosed west entrance porch is reached by a three step straight run of limestone steps which are framed by low, slightly scrolled solid stone strings. The four-sided porch to the north frames a three-part bay window containing slightly arched double hung four over six light sashes which provide access to the porch from the parlor. The compound hipped roof is carried on five round, slender columns capped with brackets. The molded eaves are finished with a continuously sawn toothed cornice. The rectangular east porch is finished similarly. The supporting columns are square and chamfered. The east rear door has a semi-enclosed stoop. The steps into the basement are enclosed.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: The center west entrance provides access to a T-shaped center hall, from which open the formal

public rooms: the parlor to the left, the dining room to the right, and the library to the rear left. A narrow passage leads from the main hall to the rear entrance and north-south traffic pattern. The sitting room and breakfast room, originally Patrick Barry's study, are located on either side of the rear entrance door. At the time of restoration, the small dining room immediately to the east of the formal dining room was converted to a kitchen. Originally, the kitchen was in the basement. The food was brought up to the pantry located on the first floor of the southeast tower, via a dumbwaiter. The second floor arrangement is similar to that of the first floor. Four bedrooms located at the four corners open from a T-shaped hallway. Two bathrooms are situated above the sitting room; another is located in the tower. Therefore, the northeast and southwest bedrooms have "en suite" baths. A small study is located on the south side of the hall, above the kitchen.

2. Stairways: The curving staircase, located on the north side of the main hall, has turned balusters and railing. The newel post is carved with acanthus leaves and an egg and dart motif. The rear curved staircase is located in the southwest corner of the T-crossing of the hall, flanking the kitchen. A straight run of stairs extends from the second floor of the tower up to the octagonal room on the third floor.
3. Flooring: There is oak flooring in the breakfast room and bedrooms. The kitchen has a cherry floor. All others are carpeted.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: All walls and ceilings are plastered and painted. In the formal public rooms compound cornices are stencilled and gilded. The carved plaster guilloche ceiling decorations and center rosette designs are painted and gilded.
5. Doorways and doors: The eleven foot high, six panel, grain painted wood doors are set in molded plaster frames. A large molded arched doorway between the library and front parlor contains sliding doors and double portieres of 1880 by W. & J. Sloane, New York City.
6. Special decorative features: All windows on the first floor have solid, painted, four panel wood shutters which fold into reveals. All second floor windows are fitted with jalousies. The formal public rooms have windows fitted with heavy incised and gilded walnut

cornice boards dating from the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Those in the front parlor are initialed with a "B" for Barry. There are eight marble fireplaces of various colors and designs, one in each of the four major rooms of the first and second floors. All have arched openings and narrow mantel shelves. Those in the formal rooms have elaborate carving, cartouches, brackets, etc. The library contains the original bookcases set into the wall and framed with plaster moldings. Arched glass doors top cupboards below. The pantry is fitted with cupboards. Although now used as a residence of the university provost, almost all the furniture and accessories belonged to the Barry family. Therefore, the house becomes a document of nineteenth century taste and usage in Rochester.

7. Hardware: The exterior doors are fitted with silvered knobs and lock plates. Some interior doors have painted china knobs.
8. Lighting: Original gas chandeliers in the main first floor rooms have been electrified.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The house, greatly set back from the street, is sited toward the west.
2. Historic landscape design: The grounds of the house, once part of the original nursery area, have an outstanding collection of rare trees and shrubs. A low stone wall at the street is fitted with a cast iron railing. Stone posts mark the entrances. A long flag stone walk extends from the street to the west entrance. The original line of the driveway has been altered to protect the trees on the south side of the house.
3. Outbuildings: The rose brick carriage house to the rear of the lot is a two story structure with segmentally arched windows, gabled roof, bracketed cornice and square cupola. This structure, perhaps later in date than the house, is now used as a garage.

To the north of the house stands the Ellwanger and Barry Nursery Office, built from designs by A. J. Davis in 1854 (see HABS No. NY-5650). To the south is the Frederick Barry House, a white frame structure in the Eastlake-Queen Anne Revival style. This structure is also owned by the University.

Prepared by Jean R. France
Amy R. Hecker
Society for the Pre-
servation of Land-
marks in Western New
York
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PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This recording project of twenty-six selections of historical and architecturally significant Rochester structures was undertaken in 1966, by the Society for the Preservation of Landmarks in Western New York, Inc., Mrs. Patrick Harrington, Executive Director, in cooperation with the Historic American Buildings Survey, James C. Massey, Chief. The project was under the general direction of John Poppeliers, Senior Historian. Architectural and historical descriptions were contributed by the Society for the Preservation of Landmarks in Western New York, Inc. General photographic documentation was undertaken by Hans Padelt, Senior Engineer, Graflex, on a contractual basis with the Historic American Buildings Survey. The final documentation and editing was done by Susan R. Slade in 1978, for transmittal to the Library of Congress and the impending publication of the Historic American Buildings Survey New York State catalogue.